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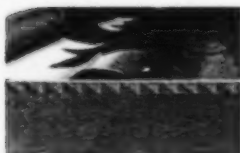
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## News Release Communiqué

2-2849

### CANADA AND ALBERTA SIGN ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH TWO OF ALBERTA'S LARGEST EMPLOYERS

**EDMONTON, AB (March 9, 2007)** - Canada's New Government and the Province of Alberta today signed partnership agreements with the City of Edmonton and Capital Health to promote career and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

The agreements were signed by the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians; the Honourable Iris Evans, Alberta Minister of Employment, Immigration and Industry; His Worship Stephen Mandel, mayor, City of Edmonton; Al Maurer, manager, City of Edmonton; and Joanna Pawlyshyn, vice-president and chief operating officer, Royal Alexandra Hospital.

Although there are two separate agreements with the City of Edmonton and Capital Health, both are similar in that they commit the organizations to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal employees, including educational and training opportunities. Each reflects and fosters fairness, inclusiveness, respect and honour for diverse traditions and perspectives, open communication, trust and consistency of approach.

The agreements are part of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI), a program that promotes the participation of all Aboriginal peoples - First Nations, Métis and Inuit - in the labour market.

"To promote meaningful participation of Aboriginal people in the workforce, Canada's New Government is proud to be partnering with some of Canada's leading companies, public agencies, industry, professional and labour groups," said Minister Prentice. "By signing these agreements, we are working to ensure that employers can recruit, retain and promote Aboriginal employees, which results in a win-win situation."

The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework emphasizes the well-being, self-reliance, and rights of Aboriginal people. Through partnerships with all levels of government and private and public sector organizations, the framework seeks to meet the needs of all Aboriginal people in the province.

"By strengthening Aboriginal employment in the health care system, Capital

Health is improving the well-being of Aboriginal people," said Employment, Immigration and Industry Minister, Iris Evans. "The City of Edmonton has the second largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada and its participation in the agreement affirms the city's commitment to Aboriginal people."

The City of Edmonton's priority for building relations with Aboriginal people is evident in City Council's declaration "Strengthening Relations between the City of Edmonton and Urban Aboriginal People" and in the administration's Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord relationship agreement with the Aboriginal community.

"The city has been moving forward in its relationship building with Aboriginal people and toward its goal of hiring and retaining more Aboriginal employees. The AWPI agreement provides the city with a solid foundation on which to do this," said Mayor Mandel.

"With the recent creation of the Aboriginal Relations Office and with Human Resources hiring an Aboriginal Outreach staff member, we expect to see more Aboriginal people considering work and pursuing a career with the city. And we are building a work environment that will welcome and sustain their involvement in our workforce."

Capital Health has identified increasing capacity to recruit and retain Aboriginal workers within its workforce as one of the key priorities within its Aboriginal Health Program's strategic plan. As part of the agreement, the health region is committed to advancing a plan to increase the number of Aboriginal people in healthcare occupations.

"Capital Health is honoured to be a part of AWPI," said Pawlyshyn. "We are committed to fostering a safe, supportive work environment and ensuring constructive cultural relations so that we can recruit and retain Aboriginal people. Participating in an agreement that is supported nationally, provincially and locally will bring additional diversity, strength and innovation to Capital Health."

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Backgrounder - Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative

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## BACKGROUNDER

### ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE

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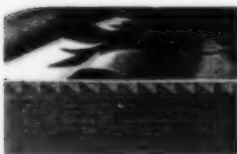
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The Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI) is a partnership initiative of the Government of Canada, committed to increasing the participation of Aboriginal peoples in the labour market. Initially launched in 1991, its mandate was renewed and enhanced in 1996.

Its goal is to educate and inform employers about the advantages of hiring Aboriginal peoples. The initiative strives to raise awareness of Aboriginal employment issues; increase the capacity of employers to recruit, promote and retain Aboriginal employees; and promote information-sharing and networking among stakeholders.

AWPI recognizes that Aboriginal employment is a complex issue, requiring a flexible approach. It supports a wide variety of activities to assist those committed to Aboriginal employment. These activities can be easily tailored to meet specific needs.

Today's agreements are with two of Alberta's largest employers.

#### CITY OF EDMONTON

The City of Edmonton is Alberta's seventh largest employers with more than 10,000 employees and operates in a number of diverse business areas including: transportation, planning and development, asset management and public works, community services, corporate business planning and corporate services.

Edmonton is home to more than one million people and the global port to more than \$100 billion in northern oil sands development, Alberta's capital is an economic powerhouse offering the nation's best combination of business opportunity and quality of life. Edmonton leads the world in healthcare research and innovation, education, and environmental stewardship.

#### CAPITAL HEALTH

Capital Health is one of the largest integrated health regions in Canada and is proud to be one of the country's top-rated health systems, known internationally for groundbreaking innovations and advances in medicine.

In 2004 *Alberta Venture Magazine* recognized Capital Health as one of Alberta's top five most innovative organizations in its survey "Alberta's Most

Respected Corporations." Capital Health was the only public sector organization on the list. Alberta Venture magazine has ranked Capital Health number one in its Top 50 Not-For Profit and Charitable Organizations in Alberta, based on revenue, assets, number of employees and clients served.

Capital Health provides complete health services to one million residents in the cities of Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove and St. Albert; and in the counties of Leduc, Parkland, Strathcona and Sturgeon (and communities within their geographical areas), as well as the Town of Devon and communities in the eastern part of Yellowhead County.

Capital Health also serves a total of 1.6 million people across central and northern Alberta, providing specialized services such as trauma and burn treatment, organ transplants and high-risk obstetrics. It also provides specialized services to N.W.T., the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut and to small numbers of people from northern B.C., Saskatchewan and the Yukon.

Capital Health is Alberta's largest employer, with more than 30,000 employees. In addition to emergency and acute care, its employees provide home care services, outreach programs, continuing care, public health, specialty clinics, mental health services and many rehabilitation and prevention programs.

Several other agreements have been signed including:

- A partnership agreement signed Jan. 24, 2007 with Siemens Canada Ltd., one of the largest and most diversified companies in the world, providing innovations in areas such as automation and control, power, transportation, medical, information and communications, and lighting. In Canada, Siemens is headquartered in Mississauga, Ont., with more than 7,500 employees located in 76 offices and seven major manufacturing facilities.
- Two agreements signed Nov. 24, 2006 in Nova Scotia with the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union and the Trucking Human Resource Sector Council to improve opportunities for Aboriginal people in these two sectors.
- In 2004, an agreement was signed with the Brandon (Manitoba) Regional Health Authority that has led to improvements in human-resources planning and delivery of health-care services. In the past three years, the number of Aboriginal employees at the authority has increased four-fold.
- In 2003, an agreement was signed with Michelin and the Province of Nova Scotia. Today, one out of every four new employees at the company is an Aboriginal person.
- An agreement with Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Canada's largest union-led to new language in collective agreements reflecting a shared commitment to foster welcoming workplaces for Aboriginal peoples.

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